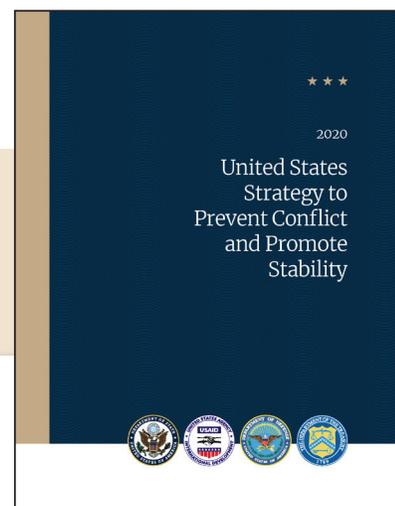




2022

Prologue to the United States Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability

This 2022 Prologue is provided to complement the 2020 U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability, submitted to Congress in line with Section 504(a) of the Global Fragility Act of 2019.



INTRODUCTION

The landmark 2019 Global Fragility Act (“the Act”) presents a new and necessary opportunity for the U.S. Government to prioritize conflict prevention and transform how it partners with countries affected by fragility and conflict to foster a more peaceful and stable world. Learning from the United States’ decades-long stabilization experiences conflict-affected settings such as Afghanistan and Iraq, and consistent with the Act, the 2020 U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability (“the Strategy”) conceives an integrated, evidence-based, prevention-focused, coherent and field-driven approach to address drivers of fragility that can threaten U.S. national security and ultimately cost millions of U.S. taxpayer dollars.

The purpose of this prologue to the 2020 Strategy is to reflect emerging threats and opportunities and outline guiding principles to inform our whole-of-government work, in partnership with other countries, institutions and organizations, as we implement the Strategy and its four goals. These principles fall into three categories: (1) we will challenge the U.S. Government status quo, (2) we will pursue meaningful partnership at all levels, and (3) we will exploit synergies with other Administration priorities. In executing these principles, we aim to fulfil the intent of the Act in a way that meets the catalytic vision of the expert civil society coalition and members of Congress who championed the Act and counters the emergent, challenging and historic trends the United States and international partners confront today.

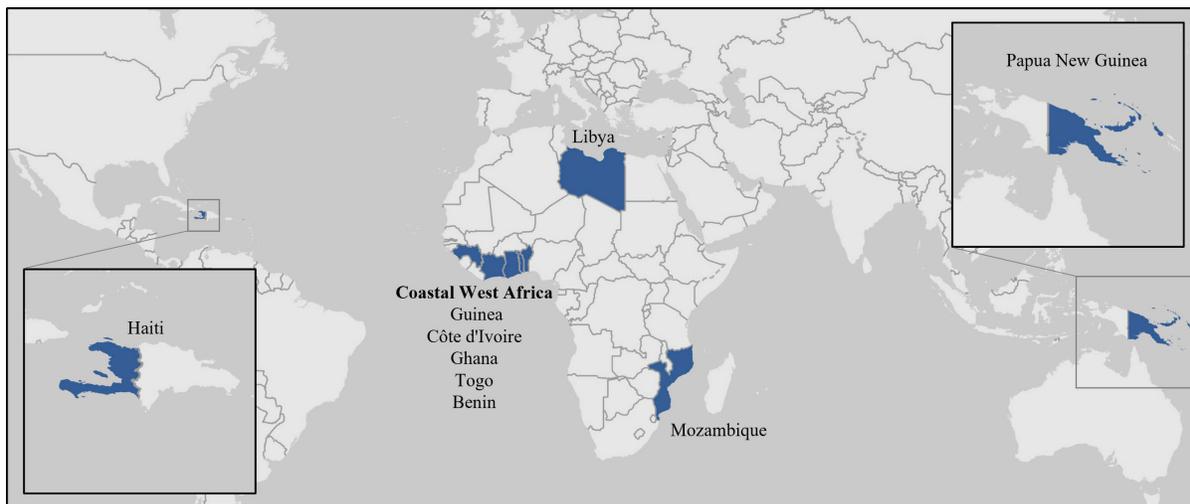
THE COLLECTIVE CHALLENGES OF OUR TIME

Every country, including the United States, has experienced fragility. The international community is grappling with challenges that cross borders and cut across societies, ways of life and economies. Democracy is increasingly under threat in many parts of the world: authoritarians are growing stronger; corruption is rotting democracy from the inside; the rule of law is under assault; civic space is shrinking; independent media is under attack; disinformation is proliferating; and human rights are under threat. Conflict is also worsening globally, placing civilians in the cross-fire, which only perpetuates cycles of conflict and violence. The global economic downturn; the alarming urgency of the changing global climate; and persistent gender, racial, ethnic, among other forms of social and political inequality, have further cleaved some communities, governments and nations. The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have expanded far beyond the global health arena to touch off economic, social, and political crises around the world. These challenges can divide people, nations and regions and lead us to retreat into isolation and fear, or they can galvanize us toward collective action.

OUR VISION

This complex set of trends provides us with a stark reminder of the paramount importance of preventing or mitigating the impact of future crises in a more strategic, unified and locally-led fashion. The U.S. Government’s approach to the GFA seeks to realize a framework in which the United States works creatively with our global partners to anticipate and prevent violent conflict and promote stability rather than reacting and responding to crises.

The world needs cooperation and investments in peacebuilding and prevention more than ever to respond to these negative trends, build peace across divided communities, leverage and enable societal resiliencies and prevent and reduce the heavy human and financial costs of protracted and recurrent crises that threaten global peace and security. The 10-year lifespan of the Global Fragility Act will endure across Administrations. As stewards in these nascent and formative years of the Act, we aim to provide a blueprint, forged by experts inside and outside of government that will stand the test of time and promote global peace and stability.



The map above highlights our areas of geographic focus. Those areas include Haiti, Libya, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea, and Coastal West Africa (Benin, Côte D'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, and Togo)

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We will implement the Strategy by abiding by the following principles and commitments with humility, perseverance and creativity.

We will reform U.S. Government foreign policy structures and processes. We will transform the way U.S. Government agencies do business by better integrating learning and planning, allowing for greater flexibility and adaptability based on local context, and improving interagency links and coordination to multiply the force of each other’s work.

Learn from the past and “play the long game”: Central to our implementation of the Strategy is a commitment to learn from our work, not only to adapt approaches in partner countries, but also to inform efforts within the United States in collaboration with our country partners. We will anchor interventions in communities, informed by the insights of

expert practitioners and academics. We will build feedback loops into our policy-making and planning processes and make strategic adjustments based on analysis, research, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of effectiveness. Our projects should not solely be measured by deliverables and performance targets, but also consider the longer term

impact of our interventions and strategic goals. It is also against our long-term strategic interests to sacrifice long-term gains for short-term wins. The 10-year time horizon of the strategy allows us to look beyond the “urgent” crises and near-term needs and focus on the “important” work of taking the necessary steps now to position the U.S. Government for success over the long term.

Drive Change in Bureaucratic Behavior: The U.S. Government is a large, and at times unwieldy bureaucracy composed of a collection of Departments and Agencies focused on executing their missions in accordance with their internal procedures, policies, budgets and cultures. Sometimes, despite leveraging internal comparative advantages, these can work at odds with the larger mission. Every Administration has faced this challenge in rallying the apparatus of government around a common cause. To foster maximum effectiveness in implementing the Act, we will adapt, evolve, and overcome structural impediments to innovation and collaboration. We will pursue budgetary, procurement, legal and staffing mandates that are fit for purpose for today’s dynamic challenges and promote the necessary conditions for us to maximize resources and results. Our proposal is to purposefully convert our bureaucratic architecture over time to facilitate the adaptive and flexible management and implementation needed to strengthen and enable prevention and stabilization within dynamic conditions.

This will require strong leadership, strategic patience, and a constructive relationship with Congress and the American people.

Pursue Whole of Government Alignment: There are numerous, related initiatives and legislative mandates under way that leverage diplomatic engagement and foreign assistance with defense activities to guide U.S. operations in conflict-affected and fragile states, including the Stabilization Assistance Review (SAR), the Elie Wiesel Genocide and Atrocity Prevention Act, the Women Peace and Security (WPS) Act, and the National Counterterrorism Review. Each Department and Agency also endeavors to implement its own slate of policy guidance for its activities. And then at the country level, the U.S. Government adds layers of country-level or regional strategies and plans. Together these strata provide a patchwork of guidance and directives. In order to ensure increased alignment across these important related mandates, we will situate the GFA as an “umbrella” that can provide an overarching conflict prevention and stabilization framework to integrate these whole-of-government approaches. To this end, we will establish a new, high-level National Security Council-led Steering Committee, composed of senior U.S. Government officials, and engaging externally with civil society and other stakeholders, to ensure the alignment of policy, resource and tools across the U.S. Government for planning and implementation that are feasible, grounded in evidence, and locally-led.

We will pursue partnership at all levels. We will work with our priority countries and societies, regional neighbors and myriad other stakeholders as true mutual partners and commit to multilateral solutions as the most effective way to marshal innovative ideas, requisite resources, and lasting change.

Shift the Narrative: We seek to shift the stigma of “fragility” to an affirmative agenda for the GFA founded on compact-like partnerships for peace and resilience. Grounded in local knowledge and emphasizing mutual ownership and accountability, these partnerships can offer

clear benefits to partner countries, so they are not seen merely as recipients of assistance but active agents of change. We will partner to leverage the presence of key resilience factors such as international connections, adaptive business and governance environments, and

agile technocrats, to help countries withstand the instability risks while advancing U.S. interests. We will implement the Strategy with humility and creativity, and through collaboration, ensure a keen awareness of the governance challenges that contribute to instability in fragile contexts. Central to the Strategy is a commitment to learn from our work, not only to adapt approaches overseas, but also to inform efforts within the United States.

Commit to Multilateralism: Much like the pandemic proved the world's interdependence and the need for solidarity in approaches, we will invest in multilateral cooperation to enhance peace and address fragility. The U.S. Government has pledged to reengage in international systems and standards and a shared vision for long-term stability. Our strength and impact are multiplied when we combine efforts with allies. Many allies have advanced individual peace and fragility agendas, and we will seek to partner with them to reinforce our common vision for preventing and addressing drivers of fragility. This also includes a commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), many of which align with GFA objectives.

Engage in active consultation: Our strength is multiplied when we combine efforts with willing partners to address common challenges, share costs, and widen the circle of cooperation. There are many stakeholders in this 10-year endeavor. In implementing the Strategy, we will seek to be the partner of choice — bringing a more affirmative and committed partnership-based agenda to the table than our geostrategic competitors, building on a foundation of mutual respect.

- **Focus regions and countries:** Ultimately, no U.S. or international intervention will be successful without the buy-in and mutual ownership of trusted regional, national and local partners. Local actors will be primary partners in country and regional

planning and implementation, in order to ensure knowledge and local ownership, support capacity building, create greater mutual accountability and transparency, and establish a foundation for long-term success. We will engage not only national level ministries and other government institutions in partner countries but also local authorities, civil society organizations, businesses, and communities. This engagement will take place with particular emphasis on traditionally marginalized and under-represented population, to identify local priorities, establish regular dialogue, create an enabling environment, and galvanize progress.

- **International Partners:** We will renew our engagement with the UN and other multilateral organizations, many of whom are actively engaged in important work to support fragile states. We will also reinvest in partnerships with like-minded countries who are also committed to addressing drivers of conflict around the world.
- **Congress:** We will continue to provide regular briefings to Congress to share progress on the implementation of the Strategy and the prioritization of countries and regions as mandated by the Global Fragility Act.
- **The American People:** We will identify opportunities to engage the U.S. public, civil society and the private sector on implementation of the Strategy. We will engage with government, civil society, and private sector partners who demonstrate commitment and capacity to prevent conflict and promote stability at local, national, and regional levels.

We will implement integrated policy responses that advance multiple Administration priorities. Global crises like the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change have laid bare that the world is irreversibly interconnected. The fates of people, the spread of disease, the effects of climate change, growing inequality, the corrosive effects of corruption, the human and societal toll of conflict, and the democratic backsliding across the globe affect every one of us in our own countries. The GFA framework aims to change the way we implement our efforts in a cohesive way in fragile contexts. We will integrate policy approaches in multiple priority areas – from democratic support and climate change to diversity and gender equity – within the GFA framework, and vice versa and leverage our economic development toolkit.

Elevate Democracy, Human Rights and Governance: Our efforts through the Global Fragility Act will advance the President’s call to action to revitalize democracy globally and to demonstrate that democratic governance and respect for human rights *deliver* for all people; that this approach is the best way to reduce fragility, advance sustainable development, and mitigate risks of violent conflict and instability. Ineffective governance, authoritarianism and repression, widespread corruption, human rights abuses and violations, weak rule of law and lack of accountability, unaddressed past atrocities, transnational criminal organizations, and weak and inequitable justice systems create and perpetuate fragility and conflict. We will therefore work with partner governments and communities to foster legitimate, inclusive, transparent, and accountable political systems that reduce fragility. Addressing issues of political, economic and social exclusion, corruption and human rights violations and abuses at early stages will reduce the need for reactive and costly security responses to crises, as well as serve as a bulwark against transnational organized crime, and violent conflict.

Mitigate Climate Change and Strengthen Environmental Security: Climate and environmental crises or hazards are reshaping our world. The Earth’s climate is now changing faster than at any point in the history of modern civilization and will exacerbate most physical, social, economic, and/or preexisting environmental vulnerabilities. Secondary effects of environmental degradation, vulnerabilities to

natural weather and geologic disasters, and climate change include displacement, loss of livelihoods, weakened governments, and in some cases political instability and conflict. We will consider and address the risks posed by the impacts of climate change and other environmental security risks and test new ways of building climate resilience and deepen our understanding of the connections between fragility, peacebuilding and the environment.

Pursue equity and equality based on gender and other factors: Research demonstrates that countries that advance gender equality and empower women, girls, and other gender-diverse persons and marginalized populations to participate in public life produce more inclusive and effective policy outcomes, are more peaceful, have higher economic growth, and are more stable as societies. The larger the gender gap, the larger the likelihood for violent conflict. Other factors such as race, class, sexual orientation, gender expression, sex characteristics, disability, and immigrant status can further perpetuate these inequalities. Our approach to the GFA’s implementation will center around the needs of the local community and elevate the participation of marginalized populations, including the right to participate in civic life free from violence, harassment and abuse. We will promote respect for the human rights and agency of women, girls and gender diverse persons and elevate their voices as a force for democratic resilience, economic growth, and peace and security. The prism of equity and diversity has also informed our country prioritization process, which has

resulted in the selection of four countries and one sub-region—each with differing vulnerabilities as well as opportunities for resilience and multilateral alliances—across four continents to prioritize stabilization and prevention approaches.

Promote security sector governance: The security sector often plays a decisive role in the political trajectory of countries experiencing fragility. When working with a committed partner, security sector reform is a powerful tool that can enhance trust between citizens, governments, and the military, law enforcement, and criminal justice institutions that serve them. As we work with partners to assist these institutions, we will focus on strengthening civilian oversight mechanisms and internal cultures of restraint, transparency, and respect for human rights, civilian authority, and the rule of law. We will emphasize the importance of including women in the security sector and peace processes in furtherance of our shared goals under Women, Peace and Security.

Manage rival powers: Countries experiencing fragility have become a stage for competition between the United States and rivals; Russia and China's influence has exploited fissures, aggravated weak governance and targeted it. We will consider how U.S. engagement in fragile states can affect and is affected by our broader geopolitical interests.

